

Message Text

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43

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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TAGS: EAID, NG

SUBJECT: NIGER DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

REF: A) STATE 121541; B) STATE 121237 (NOTAL); C) NIAMEY 1795

(NOTAL)

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SUMMARY: WE WELCOME PROPOSAL TO ENGAGE AO/OSRO IN ARRANGING

INTERNATIONAL DONOR EFFORT TO GET TRUCKS TO NIGER BEFORE AND DURING RAINY SEASON, BUT ARE CONCERNED THAT INTERNATIONALIZING THIS RELIEF EFFORT MAY DELAY MATTERS AND BRING QUESTION OF AIRLIFT INTO PLAY AGAIN. IF FAO/OSRO RESPONDS AFFIRMATIVELY WE URGE IT CONSULT URGENTLY WITH CANADIANS TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF NEW CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION WHICH WOULD MEET CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY GON FOR FOREIGN MILITARY OPERATIONS HERE, AND WITH BELGIANS TO INSURE TRUCKS THEY HAVE HERE STAY IN PLACE. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT BELGIUM FOR FINANCIAL REASONS ARE CONSIDERING PULLING OUT. MEANWHILE WE PLAN STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH GON ON OUR NEW INITIATIVE TO MOBILIZE DONORS. END SUMMARY.

1. PROPOSAL TO FAO/OSRO OUTLINED REF A FOR COMMERCIALLY FINANCED-TYPE FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE TRUCK OPERATION HAS NUMBER ADVANTAGES OVER UNILATERAL MILITARY EFFORT AND MAY WELL DO THE TRICK. WE HOPE FAO/OSRO WILL RESPOND ENERGETICALLY AND AFFIRMATIVELY. WE READY TO DO WHATEVER NECESSARY HERE TO PAVE WAY FOR THIS TYPE OF OERATION AND TO COMMEND IT TO GON.

2. AT SAME TIME WE REMAIN TROUBLED BY TWO POINTS. FIRST, INTERNATIONALIZING EFFORT OF THIS TYPE MAY MEAN DELAYS THAT NIGER CAN ILL AFFORD. AS OUR EFFORTS O MOVE GRAINS OUT OF COAST PORTS TO SAHEL HAVE DEMONSTRATED USG SEEMS TO HAVE GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY THAN OTHER DONORS WHO APPEAR MORE PREPARED TO LET MATTERS TAKE THEIR NORMAL COURSE. IF OPERATION IS IN FACT INTERNATIONALIZED UNDER FAO OR OTHER AUSPICES IT MAY STILL COME DOWN TO LARGEY US EFFORT BUT SEVERAL WEEKS LATER THAN HIGH PRIORITY UNILATERAL US EXERCISES, AND TIME IS OF ESSENCE. ACCORDINGLY, ON CONTINGENCY BASIS WE HOPE OPERATIONS ANALYSIS (REF B, PARA 3) WILL BE CONTINUED.

3. SECOND, THERE IS QUESTION OF HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO GON REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE AS SET FORTH IN ITS NOTE (REF C, PARA 2). THIS INCIDENTALLY IS FIRM GOVERNMENT DECISION SETTING FORTH GUIDELINES FOR FOREIGN MILITARY OPERATION EVOLVED SUBSEQUENT TO DUTCH AND CANADIAN SNAFUS AND AS RESULT OF OUR URGING THAT GON CLARIFY ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUCH EXERCISES OR RISK DONOR CONFUSION AND IRRITATION. GON PERCEPTION TOWARDS DONOR DIFFERENTIATION NOT APPLICABLE ANY LONGER TO USG (REF B, PARA 1). BELIEVE THAT PROBLEM IS BEHIND US.

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4. I PROPOSE SEE ACTING FORMIN AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY AND TELL HIM (A) GON REQUEST FOR TRUCKS FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO REMOTE AREAS BEFORE AND DURING RAINY SEASON IS RECEIVING URGENT USG CONSIDERATION; (B) BECAUSE OPERATION OF THIS TYPE IS COMPLEX ONE WE EXPLORING VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES INCLUDING TRUCK DELIVERIES FROM EUROPE; (C) WE ALSO CONSULTING WITH OTHER DONORS. DROUGHT ASSISTANCE FOR NIGER HAS BEEN AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AND WE BELIEVE

WE SHOULD STAY IN STEP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THIS MATTER AND HOPEFULLY ENGAGE THEM IN EFFORT, WITH ALL DONORS POSSIBLY OPERATING UNDER SOME INTERNATIONAL AUSPICE.

5. BELIEVE FOREGOING STEP IS NECESSARY BECAUSE WE NEED TO STAY IN CLOSE AND CONTINUOUS TOUCH WITH THIS NEW AND INEXPERIENCED GOVERNMENT WHICH IS AMBIVALENT ON SUBJECT OF ITS RELATIONS WITH FOREIGNERS AND FOREIGN AID. IT NEEDS AND WANTS LATTER BUT IS UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT HAVING FOREIGNERS, ESPECIALLY MILITARY, CHARGING AROUND COUNTRY IN LARGE NUMBERS DOING JOBS WHICH IT BELIEVES (USUALLY INCORRECTLY) ITS OWN PEOPLE CAN DO. AS GON REQUEST TO US SUGGESTS, THIS GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO TRUST AND HAVE CONFIDENCE IN US AND OUR INTENTIONS HERE, AND WE NEED TO MAINTAIN AND NURTURE THIS RELATIONSHIP WHICH CAN SERVE US WELL IN ANY ROUGH DAYS THAT MAY BE AHEAD AS WE CONTINUE TO COPE WITH DROUGHT RELATED PROBLEMS.

6. AS FOR GON'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE REGARDING OTHER DONOR ASSISTANCE, WE DO NOT THINK IT AS CAPRICIOUS AS IT INITIALLY APPEARS. IT HAS COOPERATED FULLY WITH FOREIGN MILITARY OPERATIONS ALREADY IN PLACE (BELGIUM), IT HAS WELCOMED AND IS PUTTING TO GOOD USE BRITISH OFFER OF MILITARY TRUCKS, AND IT WOULD LIKE US TO JOIN THESE DONORS ON TERMS SET FORTH IN REF C WHICH SEEM REASONABLE AND HAVE MERIT OF REDUCING NUMBERS WE WOULD HAVE TO COMMIT TO EXERCISE. DECISION REGARDING DUTCH OFFER SHOULD NOT BE FAULTED. AS DUTCH EXPERIENCE IN MAURITANIA DEMONSTRATES, DUTCH DIDN'T DO THEIR HOMEWORK THERE ANY BETTER THAN HERE. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND FROM LOCAL CANADIAN MISSION THAT CANADIAN ACTION NOT FORECLOSED. MATTER IS STILL REPORTEDLY BEING DEBATED WITHIN GOC. FINALLY, WE HAVE HEARD FROM LOCAL BELGIUM MILITARY COMMANDER HAT BELGIAN UNIT, WHOSE CONTRIBUTION IN MOVING FOOD-STUFFS INLA*

*****MAFVVZCZ

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